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To the form of this statement it must be objected that only persons, not 'ideas,' can 'set out to work' or 'purpose' anything. But, waiving this point, one cannot fail to see that this pragmatist conception of the true idea, as that which fulfills a purpose, is definite only in so far as it is individualistic. For it is practically no more difficult to describe the purpose of the Absolute in a given case than to estimate the relation of a given idea to the 'total objective situation.' Either the pragmatist's conception, like the absolutist's, must have no 'necessary connection' with a given case, or the pragmatist must consent to be called a subjectivist.

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MARY WHITON CALKINS.

EPICURUS. By A. E. Taylor. London: Constable & Co., 1911.
Pp. viii, 122.

This little book is one of a series (*Philosophies Ancient and Modern*) to which Professor Taylor has already contributed books on Plato and Hobbes. It is delightful reading. The main characteristics of Epicurus and his school are admirably sketched,—their 'moral invalidism' due to the indigestion to which the Epicurean circle seem to have been martyrs (he might have made more of this point when speaking of Lucretius), their likeness to the early Christians, their secularism as opposed to the religious spirit of both the Academy and the Porch, their sad want of public spirit. In short, it is a study full of interesting information, salted with ingenious conjecture, and refreshingly free from pedantry.

To have escaped being dull when writing about an ancient philosopher is much; but it would have been still better if Professor Taylor could have combined impartiality with liveliness. Though he is not unfair when discussing the general spirit of the school, his attitude as regards its systematic philosophy is too much that of counsel for the prosecution. No one would now claim for Epicurus great merit as an original thinker. But can it be true that the founder of a sect, which for about five centuries influenced large numbers of highly civilized people, including Lucretius and Lucian, was a man quite destitute of real intellectual ability? That is what Professor Taylor would have us believe. He speaks of him as a 'charlatan,' and of his philosophy as 'a clumsy amalgam of

inconsistent beliefs.' His thesis is that Epicurus borrowed his main doctrines from others, incidentally abusing his creditors; and that he was so stupid as not to see that these doctrines were mutually contradictory. Many of Professor Taylor's arguments for this view seem to me inconclusive, partly because the connections he points out between Epicureanism and other systems are often slight and conjectural, but chiefly because his explanations of Epicurus's inconsistencies are usually as ambiguous as the very positions he attacks. For instance, his main criticism is that Epicurus, while deriving his atomic theory from Democritus, combined it, in order to adapt it to current Aristotelian views, with a fundamentally incompatible theory of knowledge, namely, sensationalism. The Aristotelian connection here is the merest guess. And Professor Taylor does not succeed in clearly explaining why he thinks that the atomic theory,—the theory that nothing exists except atoms moving in space,—is inconsistent with the doctrine that 'all knowledge is derived from sensations.' This last phrase is of course highly ambiguous. But it appears from the passages quoted that Epicurus understood by it at least these propositions: 'everything immediately given to the senses exists'; 'we can know, by means of inference from sense-data, that many things exist which are never given to the senses.' These propositions are not mutually contradictory, and neither of them contradicts or is contradicted by the theory that nothing exists except atoms moving in space. They may indeed imply other propositions inconsistent with that theory, but meanwhile the philosopher who held all three at once ought not to be despised for trying to reconcile obvious incompatibles. If Aristotle, Plato or Democritus, all objects of reverence to Professor Taylor, were treated in this way, without any desire to mend their arguments and give them the benefit of the doubt wherever possible, it is doubtful whether they would come off any better than Epicurus.

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SYDNEY WATERLOW.

ECCE DEUS: DIE URCHRISTLICHE LEHRE DES REINGÖTTLICHEN JESUS. By William Benjamin Smith. Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1911. Pp. xvi, 315.

It is a widely received view that the rise of Christianity was made possible by the confluence of the two great streams of re-